

REMARKS

I. Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102

Claims 1-3, 5, 15, 17 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Shipko (U.S. Patent No. 4,316,471).

Shipko discloses a connector header with a connector block that receives a setscrew to retain an electrical lead connector element in place. Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the structure of the sealing setscrew of Shipko. As shown, a block 45 has threads 47 to receive set screw 71. A resilient sleeve 57 is cemented into an open well formed above the threaded block.

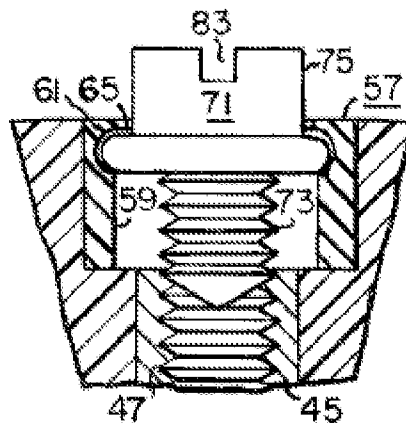
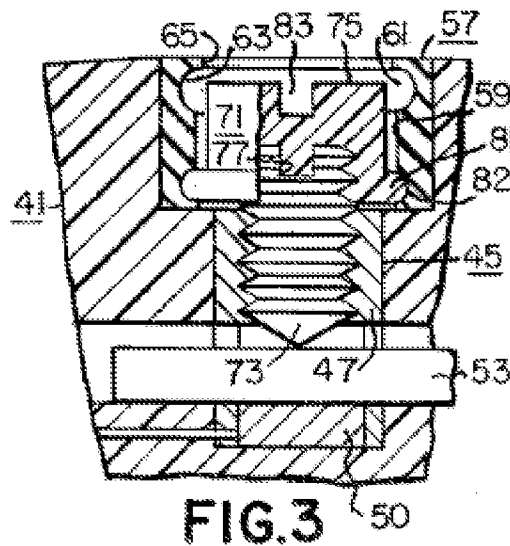


FIG. 4

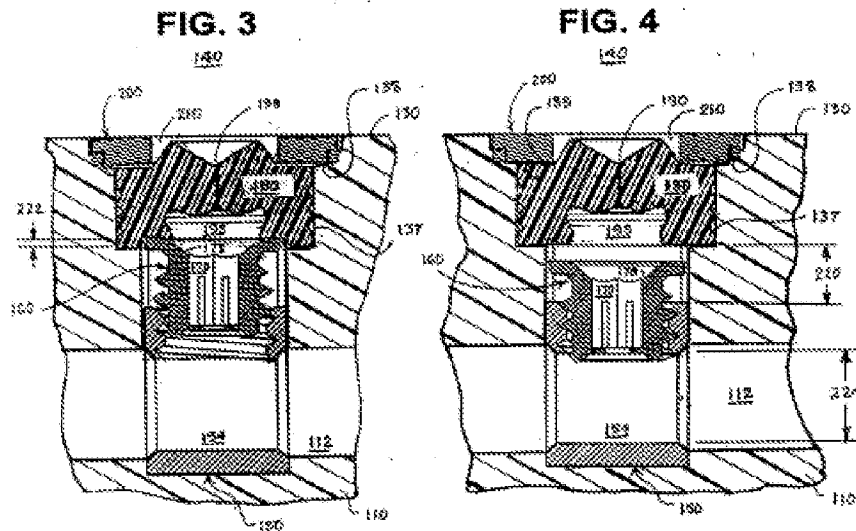
As shown in Fig. 3, wherein the setscrew is fully engaged, the resilient sleeve 57 is yieldable to that when the setscrew is screwed into the threaded receptacle 45, a projection 81 firmly engages and compresses the material of sleeve 57 at the surface 59 (col. 4, lines 26-32).



The structure of the Shipko connector fails to meet the limitations of amended independent claims 1 and 18. Absent is a penetrable grommet. As clearly specified in Shipko, element 57 is a sleeve, which has an open end. The sleeve 57 is not a penetrable grommet. To the extent that an open sleeve is considered to be "penetrable," claims 1 and 18 have been amended to recite a penetrable grommet having a self-sealing passage. The sleeve 57 in Shipko clearly cannot be said to have a self-sealing passage. In fact, the office action at paragraph 12 on page 5 admits this feature is absent in Shipko. Accordingly, the anticipation rejection should be withdrawn.

Yet further, Shipko shows a structure wherein the header includes a header block 45 with a threaded bore 47 that extends the full length of the connector block bore. Claim 1 specifies that the connector block has a first connector block bore of a first bore diameter and having a spiral bore thread with a bore thread diameter less than the first connector block bore diameter and extending along a portion of the first bore. The connector block 45 in Shipko clearly does not meet this limitation. Moreover, claims 1 and 18 specify that the setscrew has a setscrew socket head with a socket head diameter less than the diameter of the first connector block bore and exceeding the spiral bore thread

diameter. Thus, the setscrew socket head is fully recessed within the first connector block bore and displaced from the penetrable grommet when the setscrew working end is advanced into the second connector block bore. These limitations are illustrated, for example, in Figs. 3 and 4, as shown below.



In contrast, and as illustrated in Fig. 3 of Shipko, above, the setscrew head is larger than the connector block 45 bore and remains outside the connector block bore when the setscrew is advanced into contact with a connector terminal 53.

Accordingly, the anticipation rejection should be withdrawn.

II. Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

Claims 4, 12 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Shipko in view of Jackson (US 6,056,753). Alternatively, claims 4, 12 and 13 are rejected as being unpatentable over Shipko in view of Acken (US 5,509,928).

Claims 6 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Shipko in view of Fischer (US 791,548).

Claims 7, 8 and 10 are rejected as being unpatentable over Shipko in view of Acken.

Claim 9 is rejected as being unpatentable over Shipko in view of Acken and further in view of Jackson.

Claim 11 is rejected as being unpatentable over Shipko in view of Acken and further in view of Fischer.

Claim 14 is rejected as being unpatentable over Shipko in view of Acken or Jackson and further in view of Jackson.

The primary reference relied upon in all the stated obviousness rejections is Shipko. As pointed out above, Shipko fails to disclose the structure set forth in amended claims 1 and 18 as to the structural arrangement of the recited connector block and setscrew limitations. The various rejections only address the limitations of a setscrew with a funnel-shaped opening, a full length setscrew socket, and a self-sealing passage. Accordingly, each of the obviousness rejections based on Shipko fails as a matter of law.

III. Conclusion

In view of the amendments to the claims and the above remarks, Applicant submits that the rejections are overcome and request issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

/Daniel G. Chapik/
Daniel G. Chapik
Reg. No.
(763) 514-
Customer No. 27581